

# **FAMILY SUPPORT AND CHILD WELFARE SERVICES FSCWS-05-06**

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**TO: County Directors of Social Services**

**ATTENTION: DSS CPS Supervisors and Program Managers**

**DSS CPS Social Workers**

**DATE: June 6, 2006**

## **SUBJECT: REFERRALS FOR EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES CHANGE IN ELIGIBILITY**

**EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2006**

Since July 2004 county Departments of Social Services have been required to refer any child under the age of three who has a finding of “substantiated” or “in need of services” for Early Intervention Services within 72 hours of the case decision. This referral is a requirement of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) legislation and of the reauthorization of Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and these requirements have not changed. Please refer to Administrative Letters FSCWS #01-2004 and #02-2004 (<http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-05/man/index.htm>).

The Early Intervention Program has experienced a dramatic increase in the number of referrals since July 1, 2004. This increase is due, in part, to the numbers of children who are referred because of substantiated abuse or neglect, but there are other factors as well. For example, the increased use of developmental screening at pediatricians’ offices has contributed to the increase of referrals. The automatic and mandated referral of children who are under the age of three years and who have been substantiated as a result of abuse or neglect must continue.

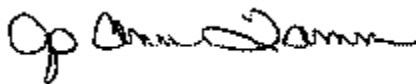
Our partners in the Early Intervention Program have worked with many different approaches to address this issue of increased referrals, as this has overwhelmed their ability to provide services. We will continue to work with our partners in the Early Intervention Program as other changes are made. One new approach that will be going into effect July 1, 2006, is that the eligibility requirements for the Early Intervention Program have changed. The new eligibility definition can be accessed at <http://www.ncei.org/ei/pdf/EligibilityDefn.pdf>. A copy of the new eligibility criteria is attached. This change in eligibility criteria will only affect children who are referred on or after July 1, 2006.

**Although the eligibility criteria for Early Intervention has changed, nothing about the new eligibility definition changes the requirement that county Departments of Social Services must refer all children under the age of three who have been substantiated or found in need of services as a result of abuse, neglect or dependency.** A referral must also be made at any time there is a concern regarding any child's development, whether a case decision has been made not. However, these children will no longer automatically be eligible for the Early Intervention Program. These children must now meet the new eligibility criteria in order to receive services. The screening process will not change as a result of the new criteria.

With the implementation of MRS and the use of Child and Family Teams (CFT's), it is expected that when CDSAs are involved with a family that they are invited to participate. These professionals have valuable information about the family and for the family, making them essential members of the CFT's.

Please contact your Children's Program Representative or the Work First/CPS Policy Team at (919) 733-4622 if you have questions about this letter.

Sincerely,



Jo Ann Lamm, Chief

Family Support and Child Welfare Services Section

JL:ttr

[Attachment](#)

cc: Sherry S. Bradsher

David Atkinson

Sarah Barham

Family Support and Child Welfare Team Leaders

Children's Program Representatives

Work First Program Representatives

Local Business Liaisons

Deborah Carroll

Sherry Franklin